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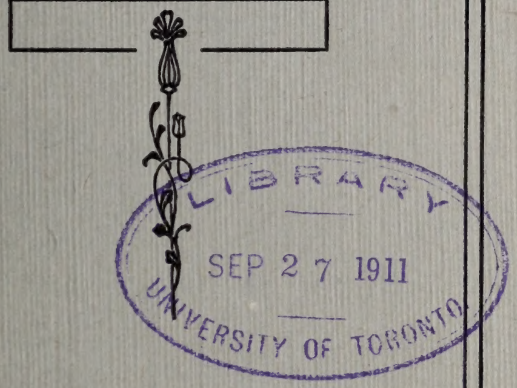
Montana

AN ADDRESS BY
HOWARD ELLIOTT
PRESIDENT OF THE
NORTHERN PACIFIC
RAILWAY COMPANY



DELIVERED AT THE INTER-
STATE FAIR, BOZEMAN,
MONT., SEPTEMBER 1, 1910

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MONTANA

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen—

And, more important than all, the young people present, upon whose intelligence, energy, industry and economy the future of Montana must, in part, depend: I wish to say to you that I am very glad to be here today, and to add what little I can to the movement to advance the development of this state so that it will become one of the great and progressive commonwealths that form that wonderful aggregation of states, the United States.

The board of directors and the secretary of your Interstate Fair association in asking me to come here said, among other things: "The Northern Pacific Railway company has been the means of accomplishing more for the state than all other agencies combined. Our association feels assured that the people of this section will appreciate more than anything else a good, stirring address by the head of the Northern Pacific."

That statement sets for me rather a hard task, for the business of managing a great railroad is one of infinite detail, and the officers must put into that work all the time and power they have in trying to do their full duty to the patrons of the road in the various states, to the large number of employes and to the large number of owners, all of whom have rights to be safeguarded on a broad and just basis.

To do all this leaves little time for making addresses, although meeting with the patrons of the road and visiting the communities served by the railroad are by far the most pleasant parts of railroad work.

Montana and The Northern Pacific

The Northern Pacific has tried to do its share in advancing the growth of Montana, and it appreciates the kind words said by the managers of the Interstate Fair association. It is now trying to do its part of the good work, and it expects to continue to go on with it for all time to come, and to work with the other railroads and with the state administration and institutions and with the progressive citizens of this state in trying to develop Montana so as to provide homes and a comfortable living for many thousands of wholesome people.

During the last 30 years the Northern Pacific company has expended for advertising, exploitation, immigration and in placing the country served by the railway before the people of the United States more than $8,000,000, and a good, liberal share of that expenditure has been devoted to telling about Montana.

Therefore, although I am an everyday, hard-working railroad officer, and not an agriculturist, I am very much pleased at being asked to address you, and to submit some facts and figures, both old and new, that will perhaps call attention to some phases of development that have not been considered fully enough in the past, and which are now being studied by thoughtful men everywhere. Montana is not a very old state and has done very well up to the present time, but it can do very much better.

Early History

Probably the first white man who ever came here came with Lewis and Clark, and in the diary of that wonderful and courageous trip of exploration is reference to this beautiful valley where we now stand. Captain William Clark records that on Monday, July 14, 1806, "I saw elk, deer and antelope and a great deal of old signs of buffalo. Their roads are in every direction. The Indian woman informs me that a few years ago buffalo was very plenty in those plains and valleys quite as high as the head of Jefferson's river, but few of them ever came into those valleys of late years, owing to the Shoshones, who are fearful of passing into the plains west of the mountains, and subsist on what game they can catch in the mountains principally and the fish which they take in the east fork of Lewis' river. Small parties of Shoshones pass over to the

plains for a few days at a time and kill buffalo for their skins and dried meat, and return immediately into the mountains. After dinner we proceeded on a little to the south and east through an open, level plain to the three forks of the east branch of Gallatin river at about 12 miles, crossed the most southerly of those forks and struck an old buffalo road (the one our Indian woman meant), which I kept, continuing nearly the same course up the middle fork, crossed it and camped on a small branch of the middle fork on the northeast side at the commencement of the gap of the mountains."

The eastern part of Montana was, as you know, a part of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, and Montana's proportion of the purchase price, based on area, was about $2,500,000.

The western part was saved to the United States largely through the voyage of Capt. Robert Gray of Massachusetts, who discovered the Columbia river May 11, 1792. By the Oregon treaty with England in 1846 the United States obtained what now are the states of Washington, Idaho and parts of Montana and Oregon. Montana was admitted to the Union Nov. 8, 1889, and will be of age Nov. 8, 1910, and now she is just getting ready to make the best of her great resources.

As to the Future

How great the state is, and how great the future possibilities, can be made clear by the statement that Montana has 8,862 square miles more area than New England, New York, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland combined. Montana only lacks 2,453 square miles of being as large as the three prosperous states of Indiana, Illinois and Iowa added together. Montana is larger than Pennsylvania, Ohio and Michigan by 1,382 square miles. The population of the North Atlantic states mentioned, on Jan. 1, 1910, was 19,143,040; of the three great agricultural and manufacturing states of the Middle West, 11,157,520; of the great states of Pennsylvania, Ohio and Michigan, 14,728,-847; of our own great state of Montana, only 410,000.

These are figures furnished by the governments of the respective states, or from official figures by state statisticians. Montana has very varied natural resources and has nearly all of the natural resources of the states named; and long before the population of this state approaches the density of those states whose resources will be developed and used by an intelligent and industrious people.

Many of the states have so-called popular names and mottoes; the popular name of Montana is "the Mountain state," and more lately "the Treasure state." Many people who know little about the state do not realize that in addition to the magnificent mountains that provide health, pleasure and sport to those who seek for them, and timber, mines and water supply for material needs, there are beautiful valleys and great plateaus already being put under the plow.

Montana's Best Resource

The man ignorant of the true Montana often thinks of it as a wild, mountainous country devoted chiefly to mining of gold, silver and copper and the raising of cattle—all most important parts of the industrial life of this state and of the nation. But the real gold and silver and the real treasure of the future must come from the soil and from proper conception and proper use of it. Nowhere can be found a better refutation of the idea that Montana is wild and undeveloped than in this beautiful Gallatin valley and its commercial metropolis, Bozeman—the "Beautiful City." Here we have an area where as fine crops are raised as anywhere in the world; we have a lovely little city of homes occupied by intelligent and cultivated men and women. We have the State Agricultural College, the Experiment Station, the United States Fish Hatchery —all doing their part to help develop the state along right lines. And let me say that it seems to me that every citizen of Montana should by his vote and his voice support the state government in trying to make the agricultural college and the experiment station the best in the country, and in trying to have wise teachers and wise teaching and practice of the science of agriculture and domestic economy reach every county, town and hamlet in the state.

Millions of Acres

The great area of Montana—146,572 square miles, or 93,806,080 acres—has not been examined sufficiently yet by the nation, state or owner, to make an accurate classification of all the lands. The best figures I have been able to obtain indicate that there are between 26,000,000 and 30,000,000 acres of land that may be classified as forest land, mountain land, water and waste land; 30,000,000 to 40,000,000 acres of land too rough to be cultivated, but producing good grass and suitable for grazing; from 5,000,000 to 6,000,000 acres that may be irrigated when all of

the various irrigation schemes are developed; from 17,000,000 to 25,000,000 acres of bench lands susceptible of cultivation by more thorough and better methods of farming.

But as Professor Linfield points out in one of his bulletins, all of this bench land cannot be cultivated because of some scarcity of drinking water suitable for people working the farms and for livestock.

It is, however, not an extreme statement to say that there are in Montana at least 20,000,000 acres of land that can be farmed successfully by the highest development of irrigation and through the increase in knowledge of better farming methods under the so-called "dry farming" plan. This leaves about 43,000,000 acres for the stockman who did so much good pioneer work in Montana. He may have to change his location and his methods somewhat, but there is ample opportunity for brains, energy and capital in this industry. It may take a little time for the stockmen to adapt themselves to the new conditions, and in certain districts some of them may be crowded out of business, but, on the other hand, the increase in irrigated land will increase the production of alfalfa and other forage crops, and the dry farmer, as well as the farmer of irrigated land, will raise more or less stock, so that it is reasonably safe to predict that more stock will be raised in the state in the future than in the past.

The stock industry needs the enactment of suitable federal legislation that will enable the stockman to purchase or lease for a certain period government land at a price which they can afford to pay. This would enable the stockmen to fence the land, thus protecting and improving the grass and result in putting the industry on a sounder business basis.

Forests and Water

There is then left about 30,000,000 acres in mountains, forests and water areas, with some waste land. Some people criticise the forest reserve policy, and no doubt, in the effort to start the work of preserving the forests and protecting the water sheds and water supply, some mistakes have been made which experience and study will correct. The ability to irrigate 5,000,000 or 6,000,000 acres of land will depend very largely on the care of the water falling in the shape of snow and rain in the mountains. Some of the annoyances and difficulties that now exist in regard to the forests will undoubtedly disappear, and

the people in Montana will procure their timber supply from these forests under terms and conditions that will be fair and reasonable to all. It is estimated that there is approximately 1,250,000 acres now under irrigation within this state; also that within five years there will be completed and put in operation various projects now under construction or contemplated by the United States Reclamation Service or private enterprises that will irrigate about as much more, making a total of 2,500,000 acres. This will leave 2,500,000 to 3,500,000 acres to be irrigated to bring the total up to the estimated irrigable area.

When one sees the tremendous volume of water carried by the streams in Montana during the flood season, fed by the snows in the mountains, and realizes that in these mountains there are opportunities for the construction of storage reservoirs, the conclusion is reached that it is only a question of time when every acre susceptible of irrigation will be under a ditch, yielding good crops and contributing to the wealth and prosperity of the state. Six million acres means 150,000 farms of 40 acres each.

Railroads in the State

My own business life, 30 years this summer, has been spent in working for two railroads—the Burlington and the Northern Pacific—and entirely west of the Mississippi river, and no one is a greater believer in the growth and possibilities of the West than I am. During much of that time the so-called railroad question has been discussed pro and con with more or less bitterness, and railway owners and managers have struggled to do the best they could to provide transportation for the country, and very, very much more needs to be done. Mistakes have been made, and no doubt will be made, because the railroads are owned and managed by human beings who have their limitations.

In Montana in 1879 there were no railroads, and now there are 4,342 miles. Every mile of railroad built has done more to increase the value of property and the comfort of living to the resident of Montana than it has added to the property or comfort of the owner or manager of the property.

Before Montana can get the highest agricultural development there must be an addition to the transportation facilities; new railroads will be needed to bring within hauling distance

the large areas of tillable land, both irrigable and non-irrigable, that are now being worked.

It has been pretty well established that a farmer cannot profitably raise grain or other products at a greater distance than about 20 miles from a railroad, unless he is fortunate in having a local market, or devotes his time entirely to stock raising. A study of the map of Montana will show that nearly one-half of the total farming area is outside of a 20-mile line from existing railroads, and the question of providing new railroads in order that the development of the agricultural resources of the state may continue is important and worthy of the most serious consideration. The state needs more railroads, and the question is how are they to be obtained.

The Northern Pacific First

The Northern Pacific came first and pioneered the way with great difficulty and loss; what is now the Union Pacific and the Great Northern followed, and very recently the St. Paul. No obstacles were placed in the way of that company's building by the older companies. On the contrary, every assistance was given to them in transporting their freight and construction material. That company, however, has not opened much new territory, and is simply dividing the business that has grown up in the last 25 years adjacent to the Northern Pacific. The same amount of investment would have furnished transportation in parts of the state where it is much needed.

Ownership of Railways

Many think that a few rich men in and about New York own and control the western roads, but such is not the case. In July of this year there were 15,650 stockholders of the Great Northern, 12,100 stockholders of the Northern Pacific, and 9,929 stockholders of the St. Paul, a total of 37,679, holding an average of only 183 shares.

The exact number of stockholders of the Union Pacific is not at hand, but it is assumed that they will be at least as numerous as the Northern Pacific, which would make a grand total of 50,000. It is not easy to find out how many bondholders there are of our great railroads, but from such examination as I have made I think it is reasonable to say that there are at least 50,000, so the four great railroads in Montana are represented by at least 100,000 separate owners. Many of these

owners are women and children—nearly 5,000 in the case of the Northern Pacific—and no doubt an equal or greater number for the other railroads.

Many stockholders have 5, 10 and 15 shares; nearly 9,000 Northern Pacific stockholders hold 100 shares or less, and many bondholders hold only one bond. Then on your railroads of 4,342 miles there are probably 20,000 men employed, so here we have 120,000 owners and employes directly interested in having Montana grow and develop. You need their help, and they need yours.

Fair Deals For All

Regulation of the great corporations is necessary and important, but attempting to manage them in detail is dangerous. When the buyer of any article, whether it be transportation or shoes or wheat, fixes rules under which the article is produced and the price at which the seller must market his product, the seller is apt to become discouraged and quit producing because the buyer will tend to reduce the price below the point where there is any inducement to the producer and seller to engage in the business. So, for the best development of Montana, it is just as important for the public to be fair and liberal to the railroads and to understand their true situation as it is for the railroads to be fair and liberal to the public and to study their needs. That the railroad is trying to do its part is evidenced by the steady improvement that has been made in Montana railroads in the last 10 years and in the co-operation between various railroads and the state in preaching and teaching improved agricultural methods, and in trying to bring new people to the state.

The Northern Pacific has had experimental farms for five years, and the Great Northern is doing the same thing, and the Milwaukee is doing its share. This year the Northern Pacific ran a special train through the state of North Dakota, Montana and Washington, covering 3,025 miles, holding 95 farmers' meetings, which, as a rule, were well attended; in many cases notably so. The train was really a traveling farmers' institute, fitted up at considerable expense by the state agricultural colleges, and the lectures and demonstrations given by the best experts of each college in the various branches of agriculture. The Northern Pacific provided the train and some of the incidental expenses, and it will be glad to

do the same another year, because everything that will bring home to the man on the farm the necessity for improved methods is most desirable.

As to Better Methods

Much has been said of the responsibility of the corporation, and particularly the railroad corporation, to the public during the last few years, and much time and thought have been given by our legislatures, both state and national, to making laws for the management of corporations. There is also a great responsibility upon the farmer and upon the teacher of the farmer. Unless the farmer and the teacher of the farmer between them manage to make greater and better use of the land, this country will, unless the estimates of population are wrong, find itself out of food, and find that it is necessary to import food from other nations. Montana in 1906 imported into the state 72,843,795 pounds of food products of all kinds for domestic consumption in excess of those produced at home, and yet, with proper work, the state could produce all it needed for itself and have a large surplus to export.

Comparisons

Compare Montana's 20,000,000 acres of tillable area and its 43,000,000 acres of grazing area with the total acreage in some of the other agricultural states.

Iowa has 35,000,000 acres devoted to grains, grass and stock.

Illinois has nearly 33,000,000 acres used in the same way.

Kansas has more than 40,000,000 acres for grains, dry farming and grazing.

Colorado has 40,000,000 acres irrigated, grazing and dry farming land.

These figures show that there is ample opportunity in Montana and that the most important work to be done in order to obtain results is to make a greater use of the 15,000,000 to 20,000,000 acres that must be farmed under the so-called dry farming plan.

Until a few years ago it was generally assumed that the annual precipitation in the great empire between the Missouri river and the Cascade mountains was insufficient to raise satisfactory crops. The students of the science of agricultural have, however, demonstrated that this is not correct, provided proper methods of tillage are followed. For the past six years, beginning in 1905, the state experiment station and the Northern

Pacific company have been conducting experiments in different parts of Eastern Montana, and there has not been a single failure. Even in this year of drouth good results have been obtained. Taking one crop as an illustration, fall wheat of the turkey red variety, the average yield at all of the experiment farms for the five years up to the end of last year was 37 bushels per acre. This year, because of a shortage in moisture, the yield at all stations averages 26 bushels per acre. This shows a falling off. Nevertheless, the yield this year shows what can be done by careful farming.

Dry Farming

Then dry farming experiments have been conducted under the direction of your fellow townsmen, Professors Linfield and Atkinson, assisted by other members of the experiment station staff. They very wisely advocated irrigation wherever possible, even on small areas in connection with dry farms, and they also preach the doctrine of diversified farming, so that every farmer may also be a stock raiser to a greater or less extent.

Montana, in 1880, had 43,495 acres in cereal grains, producing 1,417,089 bushels; in 1890, 77,162 acres, producing 2,168,665 bushels; in 1900, 254,231 acres, producing 7,599,180 bushels; in 1909, 717,000 acres, producing 28,407,000 bushels. If cereal grains could be raised on 5,000,000 acres with an average of only 20 bushels to the acre, it would mean a production of 100,000,000 bushels of grain.

In 1907, the average yield of wheat in Montana was 28.8 bushels per acre, and for the United States 14 bushels; the average yield of oats in Montana was 49 bushels per acre, and for the United States 23.7 bushels; for barley in 1909, 38.8 bushels, and for the United States, 20.4 bushels.

The average farm value per acre of wheat for the ten years period 1898-1907 for the state of Kansas was $7.56; for Nebraska $9.85, and for Montana $17.83.

These figures are given to show that Montana can produce crops better than the average when the right kind of farming is practiced.

Now, this work of improving the methods and conditions of farming is of great importance to Montana, and also to the whole United States. Every one cannot live in a city or town and live off somebody else, because the country would soon starve to death, and the drift from country to town is most

serious for the nation as a whole. The census figures show that the percentage of people living in cities and towns compared with the total population is as follows: 1790, 3.4 per cent.; 1820, 4.9 per cent.; 1850, 12.5 per cent.; 1860, 16.1 per cent.; 1890, 29.1 per cent.; 1900, 31.1 per cent.

The census of 1910 is more likely to show an increase than a decrease in the percentage of people living in towns.

The population of the country in 1880 was 50,155,783; 1890, 62,622,250; 1900, 76,303,387; 1910 (estimated), 90,000,000.

If we assume an increase of 20 per cent. for each 10-year period, the population in 1920 will be 108,000,000; 1930, 129,600,000; 1940, 155,520,000; 1950, 186,624,000.

The question of what our children and grandchildren will eat will be even more disturbing than the so-called railroad question has been during the last 20 years.

Life On a Farm

One difficulty is that there is a feeling that life on a farm and labor on a farm are not as pleasant and dignified or as much to be desired as life in a town and work at a counter or desk. It seems to me that this is an unfortunate tendency in American life and that there is no more manly or dignified occupation for a strong man than to be a successful producer of good crops on a good farm, and no more worthy life for a good woman than to rear a family in the free and healthy surroundings of the country. I believe that the schools and the agricultural colleges of the country should use their influence so that the young people who are now growing up in Montana and in other states will feel that to be a good farmer, a good orchardist, a maker of good butter, a raiser of good poultry, a raiser of the best cattle, a good housekeeper, is just as desirable, successful and honorable a life as to be a good clerk, a good miner, a good railroad man, and really a little more so, because the good farmer and the good farmer's wife are producing something new each year to help the whole country.

Farm Accounts

In addition to the good work now being done by the agricultural colleges it seems to me that more attention should be paid to developing a system of accounts showing accurately what money is expended for all kinds of farming and to instructing farmers how to keep them. Other forms of business, like milling, min-

ing, lumbering, production of steel, railroading, banking, etc., have a most accurate system of accounts so as to check very carefully any waste, and so as to show, as far as practicable, all the sources of revenue and all expenses. Not enough of this careful accounting has been the practice in agricultural pursuits, and it must be done if the best results are to be obtained.

Of late years hard, continuous work does not seem to be as fashionable as it once was, and there is more or less talk that a living ought to be obtained with only a moderate amount of work. Only in a few instances can this be true, and most of us must work long and hard all the time if success is to be obtained, and the schools and colleges throughout the land should teach the doctrine of good, hard work, and plenty of it, not only with the head, but with the hand, if Montana and the West are to be developed as they should be. Good results cannot be obtained by sitting in an office working short hours and taking it easy.

City and Country

The growing cities and towns in the country generally all have a laudable ambition to make their particular town bigger and better, and every commercial club and business man's league is working to attract people to their town or city. This is good, but if the commercial clubs and the business men's leagues would devote a part of their energy to seeing that people went into the country around their towns and cities, they would, in the long run, increase the trade of the town and city and put that trade on a sounder basis than to try to get every one to live within the city limits. Montana was favored in the federal legislation recently enacted for the adjustment of the various Indian reservations, and for the hastening of the public surveys, and the thanks of all those interested in Montana should be tendered to its congressional delegation. Too much of the state is still unsurveyed, and the more rapidly the land can be surveyed and classified and gotten ready for settlement and put on the tax rolls, the better.

It has been my pleasure in co-operating with the state authorities to have dealings with the representatives of the agricultural college, and President Hamilton and Messrs. Atkinson, Linfield and Cooley are doing good work for the state. It has also been my pleasure to talk at frequent intervals with

your progressive governor, Mr. Norris, and members of his administration, and I know how hard they are working to see that the state is placed before the country in a proper light, and to attract new people to it.

More Demonstration Farms

Not being a farmer, I cannot make suggestions in detail as to how crops should be put in and raised, but I have been impressed in reading the Montana Farmers' Bulletin No. 1, published by the officers of the farmers' institute and edited by Mr. Cooley, superintendent. If every farmer could study that carefully and then apply what he read there in a practical way it would mean much. If an experimental station could be in every county in the state, and experimental farms near by, so every farmer could see actual results, it would mean more. To do these things takes time, money and hard work. The state and those interested in developing it should beware of fads and of land speculation; they defeat the highest and best development of farm life.

Working the Right Way

Montana has the land, the soil, the water, the climate, good people, transportation and, better than all, a right spirit and the desire to go ahead and succeed. She needs more people who are willing to work long and hard, more study of farming methods and co-operation of all in an unselfish way. She needs to maintain confidence in her resources and institutions, so that when Montana people go to Chicago or Boston or New York or Philadelphia, and ask for money for irrigation schemes, water power development, railroads or other enterprises, the answer will be prompt and people will say, "We are ready and willing to put our money into Montana, because we know it has great resources, and we know we will be fairly treated, so that if we are careful and diligent we will get a return on our investment and our principal will be safe."

There is a responsibility, therefore, upon every man and woman to create a public opinion that is temperate and unprejudiced in its view of capital and labor, of the relation of the government to business, and that will prevent hasty, ill-advised and unjust legislation toward any interests.

Men have made mistakes, and will continue to make them, because human nature is not perfect. But, on the whole, this

world is a pretty good place to live in and is growing better all the time. Let us, therefore, remember the words of that master of the English language, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow—

"Look not mournfully into the past,
It comes not back again;
Wisely improve the present. It is thine.
Go forth to meet the shadowy future
Without fear, and with a manly heart."